

MR safety week topic

Dementia and MRI



By Cath Mills, BAMRR Safety Co-ordinator

Caring for patients with dementia and Alzheimer's has become a much talked about topic in MRI over the last few years. More people are diagnosed with dementia and Alzheimer's within the population due to an increased awareness of the diseases, advances in medicine and treatment, and a longer average life expectancy. Many nhs trusts now have dedicated 'memory clinics' with pathways in place to diagnose and treat dementia and Alzheimer's. In MRI we have seen an increase in referrals for MRI Brain scans from memory clinics, and because of this it is important that we understand these diseases so that we can offer patients with suspected and diagnosed conditions the best possible care during their MRI experience.

This group of patients offer extra challenges within MRI as it is often more difficult to ascertain MR safety when completing screening questions prior to scan if they are experiencing memory problems, and during the scan there are challenges in completing scan sequences when the patient is fidgeting or moving. Due to the longer examination times associated with MRI there is a risk with patients who have memory problems to become anxious and distressed if, for example, they forget where they are during the scan, and this adds an extra challenge to the Radiographer to complete a suitable diagnostic scan with minimal movement artefact on images.

See how one MRI department in Blackburn has altered their scan pathway to care for patients with suspected or diagnosed dementia and Alzheimer's by downloading the PDF also available as part of this safety week release.

Below we have listed some resources about Dementia, Alzheimers and MRI.



Resources

Society of Radiographers *Practice Guideline Document Caring for People with Dementia: a clinical practice guideline for the radiography workforce (imaging and radiotherapy)* (May, 2020)

https://www.sor.org/getmedia/db2b70ad-2771-42f1-a204-009fde177071/sor_dementia_academic_doc_llv2.pdf

Society of Radiographers *Summary for person centered dementia care*

https://www.sor.org/getmedia/333322df-fdff-41c1-bcbe-e2fb172c29b5/appendix_7.pdf

SoR article *Improving experiences of radiotherapy for people living with dementia and their families* (Oct 2019)

<https://www.sor.org/News/Patients-with-additional-needs/Improving-experiences-of-radiotherapy-for-people-l>

SoR article: A quiet waiting room for patients with dementia

<https://www.sor.org/News/Ezine/A-quiet-waiting-room-for-patients-with-dementia>

The Role of MRI in Dementia Pantano, Caramia, Pierallini, (1999)

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/10662960/>

Alzheimer's society

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/types-dementia/what-dementia>

Demnetia.org

<https://www.dementiauk.org/>